

'Don't classify us as culprits'

By HARRISON RAINIE
and JOSEPH VOLZ

Washington (News Bureau)—Two men who held sensitive jobs on the National Security Council in the Jimmy Carter White House and now work for the Reagan administration have taken the extraordinary step of issuing formal statements denying they leaked information to the Reagan presidential campaign in 1980.

The issue has come to a head since President Reagan's former national security adviser Richard V. Allen admitted receiving material during the campaign from a source inside the Carter National Security Council. The FBI has interviewed Allen.

Allen described the material as "innocuous" and dealing with such matters as NSC staff morale, but other sources alleged it was classified information. If it was classified, the leaker—and Allen—could face criminal charges, and this is a major focus of the FBI probe.

JERRY D. JENNINGS, security chief of the NSC under Carter and now executive secretary of Reagan's White House Office of Science and Technology, issued a statement denying he was the leaker. He said he did so because reporters told him that Allen privately had named him as the source of the material.

"Any suggestion is untrue and absolutely ludicrous," Jennings said in a written statement, first issued to the Los Angeles Times and then to other reporters. "You would be in error publishing something that is clearly libelous."

In addition, Gen. William Odom, now head of Army Intelligence and a ranking NSC official during Carter's tenure, issued this formal statement through the Army press office:

"I was not involved in any unauthorized transfer of information to anyone outside National Security Council channels. Furthermore, I was not in-

volved in any aspect of the preparation of the Carter campaign briefing materials, nor was I knowledgeable of any aspect of their preparation."

THE TWO STATEMENTS came as efforts on two fronts, the FBI investigation and a separate congressional inquiry, intensified to find the "mole" in the Carter camp who provided key campaign information, and perhaps national security information, to Reagan operatives.

Jennings and Allen reportedly have had a stormy relationship because Jennings was the official who examined several gift-wrapped packages and an envelope containing \$1,000 that were found in a safe in an office formerly occupied by Allen.

He turned the materials over to White House counselor Edwin Meese, and eventually they figured in a Justice Department investigation that forced Allen to resign, even though no wrongdoing was found.

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